

# Using Smartphone in the ESL Classroom Improves Students' Vocabulary Acquisition via Kahoot!

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This paper is aimed to investigate and demonstrate the positive impact of using smartphone through Kahoot! game-based platform in the English Language Classroom to improve students' English vocabulary acquisition. The current development in Malaysian education field, 21st century learning style is more focused and given importance. Specifically, the game-based learning platform such as Kahoot! through its capability can create a meaningful learning environment. Vocabulary acquisition was measured in terms of reading passage assessments. The sample of 30 students of diploma level from a college participated in this study. Antonym and Synonym with Contextual Clues were parts of the items in the assessment. Results indicated that all students improved their vocabulary assessment scores in the game-based quiz Kahoot! was played. The use of Kahoot! also increased students' participation and involvement in ESL classroom. The results of the student satisfaction survey indicated that students enjoyed using their smartphone in the classroom during the lesson and playing the game-based quiz Kahoot!. They found this Students Response System is easy to use.

**Keywords:** Kahoot!, vocabulary, ESL, Antonym, Synonym

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Majority of college and university students in our country currently using smartphone as a favoured method of communication. In spite the rules at schools in specifically state that mobile phones should not be in schools, it is quite obvious that this would require constant monitoring, therefore, it would be more advantageous to utilise these smartphones in teaching. However, this rule does not apply for post-secondary school students such in colleges and university. There are many case studies on using smartphone in the classroom. According to Marcus A, Hennesy in his article stated that there are three examples of the situation that school students are allowed to bring and use their smartphone in the class with certain rules and regulation.

*"...Teens at Mounds View High School in the Twin Cities area were given the green light to use their favorite technologies in class, including PDAs, tablets, and smartphones. Teachers concede a few drawbacks to the new policy, but they contend the learning opportunities outweigh the disadvantages. Impressed with the positive feedback generated by supportive teachers, the Minneapolis School District recently approved a broader measure to allow tech devices into more classrooms..."* Marcus A, Hennesy (2017)

In order to understand how this device can be manipulated into games and learning technology, this paper will explore how games-based quiz can be used for learning and how it affects giving positive impact to the user as students and teachers. Are there any engagement and motivation built in the lesson? This paper is aimed to investigate and demonstrate the positive impact of using smartphone through Kahoot! game-based platform in the English as A Second Language (ESL) classroom to improve students' English vocabulary acquisition.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is undeniable that quiz game applications based on students' response tools such as Kahoot! is considered as one of the relevant sources to build complementary education material that attract twenty first century students. As general, this tool allows building online quiz games, which can be used in the education area especially in ESL class.

It has also been argued that game-based situated learning environments promote student motivation and engagement. Unfortunately, very few researchers began to move the discussion of complex problem solving beyond descriptive research (Eseryel, Law, Ifenthaler & Gee 2012).

Students do not need a Kahoot!! account to access the quiz and can access the quiz through any device with a web browser, such as an iPad, Android device, or Chromebook (Byrne, 2013). It is an advantage since there are many students and almost all tertiary students have a smartphone to access into this game. However, teachers do need an account to create quizzes (Thomas, 2014).

By using only, the small but smart device that is smartphone, this technology can be manipulated as teaching and learning tool for delivery lessons in the classroom. Furthermore, it shows that smartphones can have a huge impact on student achievement as described by Gretchen Krebs (2012) in her article. The advantages and disadvantages as learning and teaching tools were discussed by Ecycle (2012) and stated that smartphone apps allow college students to access information quickly, thus increasing their college performance.

Chen (2013) researched the educational versus non-educational app usage among college students found that almost 60% of the college students used their mobile devices for academic purposes and gave the positive impact in their academic.

Implementing vocabulary instruction through the use of technology has the ability to increase student test scores (Sharma & Unger, 2016). Utilizing technology to teach vocabulary creates an engaging means of instruction that also allows for a transition from monotonous and outdated dictionary practices to meaningful exercises (Sharma & Unger, 2016). Kahoot!!, a game-based learning platform that serves as a student response system (Dellos, 2015), provides an engaging method for students to practice their newly learned vocabulary.

The ability to utilize Kahoot!! as a student response system may encourage students who have anxiety or are introverted to participate more freely; thus, making the lesson more effective for them (Stowell & Nelson, 2007). In addition, Kahoot!! provides immediate feedback to the teacher and student (Stowell & Nelson, 2007), which serves as a formative assessment. It appears that students have the ability to self-assess their progress throughout the use of Kahoot!. In addition, teachers can gauge their students' progress on vocabulary acquisition while creating a fun and engaging means for promoting learning and retention.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

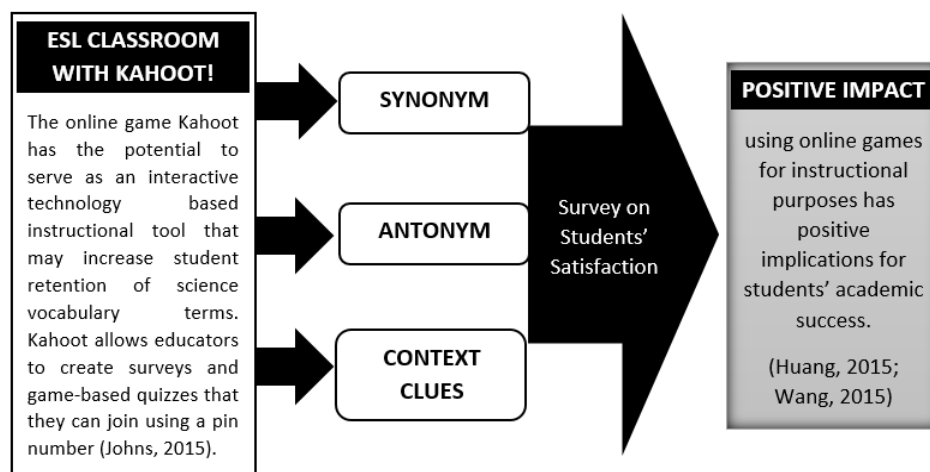
In this study, thirty students (30) were chosen as the sample for the research. They are diploma students in semester one with the average level of English proficiency. This can be seen through their result in SPM that scored only credit.

The lesson for reading comprehension used common topics as scheduled in the scheme of work or course outline that provided by the college academic affair. Meanwhile certain common subtopic in reading comprehension such as information transfer, contextual clues, dictionary skills, predict the outcomes, skimming and scanning were discussed in the lessons. These reading techniques were the valuable and useful techniques to gain and improve students' vocabulary acquisition.

Students were assessed on their vocabulary acquisition via weekly vocabulary quizzes generated in Kahoot!! at the end of every reading comprehension lessons. This is a way for students to utilize the Kahoot!! as a medium of assessment tool and at the same time to make them get used with technology in education. However, there was one game-based quizzes that took part as formal assessment for this research after finished all the reading comprehension lessons in three weeks.

Students were also asked about their satisfaction on the online game-based quizzes; Kahoot!. They were given a Likert survey after they finished their formal assessment with Kahoot! game-based quiz.

### 3.2 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study with the concept that is based on John, 2015 and Huang & Wang 2015.

*"...The online game Kahoot! has the potential to serve as an interactive technology based instructional tool that may increase student retention of science vocabulary terms. Kahoot! allows educators to create surveys and game-based quizzes that they can join using a pin number (Johns, 2015)."*

After common session of the lesson for reading comprehension; series of questions were tested through the game-based quizzes, Kahoot!. This assessment wants to figure out this method of application as a medium of assessment does give the positive impact for student's vocabulary acquisition or not, instead of dull and common answers writing using the traditional way; paper and pen. Antonyms, synonyms and contextual clues were parts of the content in the questions tested. Study by Joseph Pede (2017) showed that students improve their scores in assessment through Kahoot! and managed to retain their vocabulary acquisition tremendously.

At the same time, the study also wants to find out the students' satisfaction on Kahoot! as a tool in their lesson in English classroom. This can be determined by the survey on students' satisfaction distributed. This conceptual framework also states that the implication for students in learning the lesson with this method, Kahoot! that gave positive impact for academic success with fun, easy and encouraged learning atmosphere. Huang and Wang (2015) have mentioned that:

*"...using online games for instructional purposes has positive implications for students' academic success."*

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 4.1 Individual Students' Formal Kahoot!! Quizzes Scores**

<b>Students</b>	<b>Antonym (20 marks)</b>	<b>Synonym (20 marks)</b>	<b>Context Clues (10 marks)</b>	<b>Total Marks (100%)</b>
Student 1	18	19	10	94
Student 2	20	20	10	100
Student 3	20	20	10	100
Student 4	20	20	10	100
Student 5	20	20	10	100
Student 6	20	20	10	100
Student 7	20	20	10	100
Student 8	20	19	10	98
Student 9	20	19	10	98
Student 10	20	19	8	94
Student 11	19	19	9	96
Student 12	20	19	9	96
Student 13	19	19	9	96
Student 14	20	19	9	96
Student 15	20	19	9	96
Student 16	20	19	9	96
Student 17	19	19	9	94
Student 18	20	19	9	96
Student 19	18	19	9	92
Student 20	17	19	9	90
Student 21	20	18	9	94
Student 22	20	18	9	94
Student 23	20	18	9	94
Student 24	20	20	9	98
Student 25	20	20	9	98
Student 26	20	20	9	98
Student 27	20	20	9	98
Student 28	20	20	10	100
Student 29	20	20	9	98
Student 30	20	20	9	98

Table 4.1 shows the results of the individual scores for the formal assessment at the end of all reading comprehension lessons were taken. From the data obtained 7 over 30 students or 23.33% showed the highest score that they did all the correct answers. This finding proved that Kahot! used in teaching and learning reading comprehension with the exercises and practices to answer the vocabulary assessments did bring positive effect to students on their vocabulary acquisition. With regards to the

margin of score among students, the lowest score was 90% that student 20 did answer only 45 correct answers. Generally, it can be said that students by drilling, exercising and practicing answer through Kahoot!!, students can improve and retain their vocabulary acquisition.

The purpose of this study is to explore how smartphone can be manipulated into games and learning technology such as Kahoot!. The result of vocabulary assessment through Kahoot!! and students answered their quizzes or tests by using their smartphones, showed and proved this technique gave positive impact to the user as students. This study reinforces previous study by Abrams & Walsh (2014) that suggested using online games for vocabulary instruction increases student vocabulary assessment scores.

Is there any engagement, motivation and satisfaction built in the lesson? To answer this question, the result of the survey showed that their satisfaction through Likert-scale to investigate and demonstrate the positive impact of using smartphone through Kahoot! game-based platform in the English as A Second Language (ESL) classroom to improve students' English vocabulary acquisition.

**Table 4.2 Students' Satisfaction Survey**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Undecided (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Strong Disagree (%)</b>
1	I found Kahoot! easy to use.	93	7	0	0	0
2	The Kahoot! game kept me on task.	66.6	16.6	16.6	0	0
3	I would rather use technology to stay on task.	83.3	16.6	0	0	0
4	The Kahoot! game was a distraction.	0	0	0	56.6	43.3
5	I would like to use the Kahoot! game in other classes or settings to help me study.	50	40	10	0	0
6	I enjoyed using the game in class.	90	10	0	0	0
7	I am prepared for tests and quizzes after using Kahoot!.	47	43	10	0	0
8	I would like to share this technology with friends and other students.	100	0	0	0	0

Table 4.2 shows, the result of the survey of students' satisfaction through Likert-scale to investigate and demonstrate the positive impact of using smartphone through Kahoot! game-based platform in the English as A Second Language (ESL) classroom to improve students' English vocabulary acquisition. All thirty (30) students completed the Likert satisfaction survey. All of the students or 100% strongly agreed and agreed that Kahoot!! was easy to use. In addition, 83.2% of the students indicated

that Kahoot! kept them on task while 16.6% undecided. 83.3% of students indicated that they strongly agreed to use technology to help them stay on task. 100% of the students indicated that they did not think that Kahoot! was a distraction to them in class. It indicated that 100% of the students enjoyed using Kahoot!. and 90% of students indicated that they felt Kahoot! helped to better prepare them for tests and quizzes while 10% undecided. All of them strongly agreed they would rather use technology to learn than paper and pencil and all students strongly agreed they would like to use Kahoot!! in other classes to help them learn. In terms of sharing the technology with others, 83% of students indicated that they would like to share Kahoot! with other students.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Technology in education is one effort that teachers can open for their students on their academic journey. Students are asked to bring their smartphones to college as an instructional device that can be used to enhance learning in the classroom. Game-based learning is a best practice in education and finding ways to integrate competitive games in the classroom that promote learning is essential for educators in the twenty first century. To integrate the technology in education with ready personal devices for every college student, the Kahoot!! is amazing.

In order to maintain the privileges of using smartphone in the classroom, teachers and administrators have to conclude that students are eager to uphold the terms and conditions given. On the other hand, the advantage of innovative technology of smartphone itself can be used and manipulated as medium of improvement in their academic success.

This study was encouraging as it shows the positive effect that Kahoot! has improved and retain students' vocabulary acquisition. It also showed that Kahoot! in class does have some positive effects on keeping students focused and increasing on task behavior. The results of the student satisfaction survey were positive and showed that the students enjoyed playing Kahoot! as well as found it beneficial to their assessment preparedness. While this study demonstrates the positive effects that Kahoot! has on vocabulary acquisition in students.

Further studies are recommended to be conducted with a larger number of participants, and over a greater time period to further the research on Kahoot! and vocabulary acquisition. All these statements can be a reality if educators teach respectful and appropriate use the technology in the classroom and use it to build students' academic right path. As a result, the future of education technology looks bright.

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